

**Recommended Website:**

[www.fullmarriageexperience.com](http://www.fullmarriageexperience.com) features articles and resources on a range of premarital issues including mentoring, the value of premarital counseling and online assessments.

**GOING FURTHER – Church Support**

**Pastoral Pre-Marital Counseling**

Start your marriage strong and stay focused on God's design for marriage by scheduling pre-marital counseling with a church minister. If you do not have a relationship with an NRHBC minister, contact Diane Bourne at [diane@nrhbc.org](mailto:diane@nrhbc.org), 817-284-9206

**NRHBC Weddings**

For information on scheduling a wedding at the NRHBC facility contact Sharon Kunkel at [sharon@nrhbc.org](mailto:sharon@nrhbc.org), 817-284-9206

**Cornerstone Counseling Center**

NRHBC partners with Cornerstone to provide Christ-centered professional counseling at fees low compared to comparable services in the community. For more information or to make an appointment, call 817-595-2520.

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**Engaged**  
*Getting Ready for  
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# Getting Ready for Marriage

*From Stuart Pendell, Minister of Couples  
With Kurt Bruner, The Center For Strong Families*

Congratulations on this wonderful milestone. Few seasons in life are filled with as much joy and anticipation as the time spent preparing to get married.

You've probably heard it said that as you plan your wedding, you shouldn't forget to plan your marriage. But it sounds so abstract to "plan a marriage" in the midst of the more tangible (and demanding) project of planning a wedding. How do you do it?

## **STEP ONE: Learn from others**

Research demonstrates the long-term value of making time now for marriage education classes or premarital counseling. Those efforts go even further when you supplement them by spending time with an older married couple whose relationship you admire.

## **STEP TWO: Plan with patience**

Couples often overlook the importance of using the wedding planning season as practical marriage preparation. You can intentionally set the tone for your marriage by the values you live out in planning your big day. The transformational process of "becoming one" can occur in everything from how you assemble your guest list to how you determine a honeymoon destination.

## **STEP THREE: Discover the purpose of marriage**

A wedding is bigger than you as an individual and even bigger than you both as a couple. Ephesians 5 describes a couple laying down their lives for one another and becoming one as an icon of God's sacrificial love for His church. That's the counter-cultural call of Christian marriage. Read *The Marriage Masterpiece* by Al Janssen in order to discover the beautiful picture God intends every marriage to reflect.

## **STEP FOUR: Create a meaningful event**

To focus on the sacred nature of marriage in the early church couples often stood during the course of a weekly service to exchange their vows. Those weddings were a part of the community of faith's worship routine and a public vow within a church body.

They did not have anything resembling the grand ceremonies typical of modern weddings, focusing instead on the meaning and purpose of marriage. That's not to say big celebrations are out of order, but many risk making them so complex that they fail to honor God or the community they are uniting – both of which are the basis for a strong Christian marriage.

## **GOING FURTHER – Resources**

### **Recommended Books:**

(Available to check out from the church library.)

***Your Marriage Masterpiece*** (by Al Janssen) The Bible opens and closes with a wedding and in between God uses the metaphor of marriage more than any other to describe His relationship with His people. So what does that mean for your pending marriage? Al Janssen tells the bigger story of marriage as God created it and as couples can experience it.

***Love and Respect*** (by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs) discusses a powerful biblical model for each spouse understanding and meeting the other's most deeply felt need.

***Before You Say "I Do"*** (by H. Norman Wright and Wes Roberts) explores how to clarify role expectations, establish a healthy sexual relationship, handle finances, and acquire a solid understanding of how to develop a biblical relationship.